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HEALTHY HOWARD CHANGES TO INCLUDE THE NEWLY UNEMPLOYED

WHO: Dr. Peter Beilenson

WHAT: Press Briefing

WHEN: Friday February 6th, 11 a.m.

WHERE: Howard County Health Department

WHY: Newly unemployed workers in Howard County have caused a dramatic increase in the number of people without health insurance or access to health care. Recently laid-off workers typically lose health coverage along with their jobs. The total number of unemployed in Howard County is now almost 5,000 people.

To help unemployed workers and their families, the Healthy Howard Access Plan is changing its regulations to eliminate the requirements that new members be without insurance coverage for six months before joining the program, if the prospective member has recently become unemployed.

"That rule made sense six months ago," says county Health Officer Dr. Peter Beilenson. "Now it doesn't, so we're changing it."

County Executive Ken Ulman supports the change, noting that "The unemployed need medical care as much or more than anyone else. As President Obama said, we want to help them get up, dust themselves off, and get back to work."

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